Writing about *The Taming of the Shrew*

Can you use this question as a starting point to explore your own, original ideas about the play?

Essay question

How does this part of the script show the audience more about Petruchio's character and about the rest of the play?

Remember, you can also refer to the characters, events and themes from the rest of the play as you write your response.

Act 1 Scene 2, lines 62–73

PETRUCHIO Signor Hortensio, 'twixt such friends as we
Few words suffice, and therefore, if thou know
One rich enough to be Petruchio's wife –
As wealth is burden of my wooing dance –
Be she as foul as was Florentius' love,
As old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd
As Socrates' Xanthippe or a worse,
She moves me not, or not removes at least
Affection's edge in me, were she as rough
As are the swelling Adriatic seas.
I come to wive it wealthily in Padua;
If wealthily, then happily in Padua.

Plan your essay

Work with the extract above and complete the table below as you explore your ideas.

What is your interpretation of this part of the play? • What is happening here and how does this relate to the rest of the play? • What does it show about the way Petruchio sees love and marriage?	
What strikes you about Shakespeare's language? • What vivid images or descriptions are used in this passage? • How do these descriptions relate to Katherina and to other characters in the play? (For example, look at: 'Be she as foul as was Florentius' love / As old	

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as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd / As Socrates' Xanthippe or a worse, / She moves me not ...')	
What strikes you about Shakespeare's dramatic craft? • How would this conversation between Petruchio and Hortensio be portrayed on stage? • What actions, tone of voice or gestures might be suggested in the script? • What might Hortensio's response be? • What might an audience be thinking or feeling as a result Shakespeare's dramatic craft? (For example, look at: 'Signor Hortensio, 'twixt such friends as we / Few words suffice ...')	
How does this passage compare to other parts of the play? • How do Petruchio's words come to be proved true or false in the rest of the play? • Can you describe the way in which Shakespeare provides a dramatic experience for the audience as well as an interesting story with well-developed characters?	

You will now have some concrete ideas that you can include in your essay. You might like to reorganise your ideas or add in other examples from the play to make a clearer plan. Use mind maps, bullet points or flow charts with words, images, sentences, thought bubbles and prompts that are intelligible to you.

Structure your essay

You will need to follow certain rules to give your writing a clear structure. Your essay should have:

- an introduction
- a main body with a paragraph for each point you are making
- a conclusion.

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Remember to refer to the play in detail

For each paragraph use the acronym **PEA** to remind yourself of the three things that you need to include. Each paragraph needs:

P a main **point**
E **evidence** from the script (quotations and examples)
A to explain why the evidence helps to prove your point in an **analysis**.

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